

~~SECRET~~ 3.4
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~~NO~~ HB 456

March 2, 2011

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

In 1977, while a nursing student in Butte, I wrote a paper about teenage pregnancies. During my research, I interviewed principals and PE teachers at two public junior high schools to inquire about their sex ed curriculum. I learned there was no sex education. I also heard a story I've never forgotten.

A thirteen-year-old eighth grader, after having had unprotected intercourse, took one of her mother's birth control pills, thinking that single pill would prevent a pregnancy. The girl did not get pregnant that month. Her mother did.

Please do not put Montana children, or their parents, at risk of unplanned pregnancies by placing restrictions on comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education. Knowledge is power. Studies have shown that when teenagers receive comprehensive sex education, including information about contraception, they are more likely to delay sexual activity and to use contraceptives appropriately if they do become sexually active.

Reproductive health educators not only provide information about preventing unintended pregnancy—information that thirteen-year-old girl desperately needed thirty-four years ago—but they also empower students by teaching about healthy relationships and self-worth.

I strongly encourage you to oppose HB 456.

Sincerely,
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